

*Washington, DC* - With the broad support of veterans' organizations, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) this week voted to pass landmark legislation to help ensure that veterans and their families get the care and support they need and deserve. The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act will provide support to families who care for disabled, ill or injured veterans, and enhances health services for 1.8 million women veterans. The bill also includes an expansion of mental health services and improves access to health care for veterans in rural areas.

"The brave men and women who protect our country need and deserve our support as they address the physical and mental wounds they've suffered in the line of duty," said Hinchey. "I'm proud to have voted to pass this landmark legislation, which improves health services for veterans and provides assistance to the family members who care for those who have been injured. For too long, military families have shouldered the burden of care, and this legislation will provide the relief they desperately need."

To help military families deal with lengthy recovery and rehabilitation periods, the bill provides education, counseling and mental health services. The bill also offers respite care for family members, providing a temporary break from the physical and emotional challenges faced by caregivers. It also provides health care and a stipend for those living with and assisting severely wounded veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This bill also improves benefits for a growing number of returning women soldiers. It will for the first time in history allow the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to offer pre-natal coverage and care for newborn children. It will also improve access to care for veterans in rural areas, ensure that the VA can better treat veterans suffering from mental health issues, and provide the VA with resources to learn more about the tragically high suicide rate among veterans.

Several veterans' organizations have voiced their strong support for the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, Wounded Warriors Project, and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Hinchey joined the U.S. Navy after graduating from high school, serving in the Pacific Ocean on the destroyer U.S.S. Marshall.

